

**Overstreet, Greg (ATG)**

---

**From:** jays@techline.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 10, 2006 10:55 AM  
**To:** Overstreet, Greg (ATG)  
**Subject:** Public Record Comments

The following message was submitted to the Office of Attorney General:

**From:** Sterling, Jay  
**Email Address:** jays@techline.com  
**Organization:** Retired  
**Address:** 410 1st North  
Montesano WA 98563  
**Phone:** 360-249-6009(Home)

Comments:

Dear Greg and Rob, I have diligently worked my way through the proposed model rules and comments and really don't have much to add as I personally have not had much need to research public records and when I have asked for something i haven't experienced any problems. I will say that the term "electronic records" so frequently referred to could be subject to misinterpretation. In my day it would have meant voice recorders of one kind or another but now of course it is mainly all of the digital computer records as well as digital photography. The rules do define "records" as covering all means of recorded communication but there may be different methods of handling the various type of electronic records. An associated concern is when minutes of meetings are transcribed from a voice recorder or steno notes and "cleaned up" in the process of being published. Should the original recording be retained and made available to the public? The requirement for a Public Records Officer is certainly a good concept but I hope it is understood that some members of the public will need more help than professionals seeking record access with the requirement to identify "identifiable records" The Model Rules are a step in the right direction but we are still a long ways from guaranteeing an "open" and "transparent" government. It may even be a step backward in that it might induce public officials to become even more creative in avoiding a paper trail. In our County for instance all of the important business of the Commissioners takes place in back rooms and at the weekly staff meeting with the formal public meeting becoming nothing more than a rubber stamp operation. The same is true of our City Council meetings although with seven Council members there is more likelihood of dissent and a pubic debate. In addition there is such a delay in making the minutes from previous Council meetings available they are often no longer relevant. Maybe there should be a requirement for a Public Ombudsman at all levels of government where there are elected officials involved. Obviously there is no easy answer for a problem that has been going on since history began but thanks for trying and for the opportunity for me to participate. Jay Sterling